



## From the National Director



NCEC maintains the largest bank of electoral and demographic data by precinct in the nation. A precinct is the smallest political subdivision. There are roughly 220,000 precincts in the country.

This unique asset gives the NCEC the ability to produce precise precinct-by-precinct electoral and demographic targeting analysis, voter profile analysis, media market studies, and other campaign technology. NCEC contributes these state of the art campaign tools to our candidates for free. We give them an advantage over their conservative opponents who are usually much better financed by big business and special interests. We level the playing field by making it possible for our candidates to use their scarce resources to maximum political advantage.

In this *Election Update* we begin to focus on the election marginality and electability of House and Senate candidates. This unique material from the NCEC databank is factored into the equation to help us make sound political judgments.

Since our inception 58 years ago, one of the important support services we provide to the entire progressive, good government community is our political intelligence on the electability and marginality of 435 House races and the 33 US Senate races up for election every two years. We think we have the best political intelligence in the country. More importantly, everyone else seems to agree with us.

From now until the polls close next November we will be under constant pressure to provide our latest political thinking to women's groups, environmental organizations, progressive trade unions, the human rights/civil rights community and everyone working to maximize the votes for Democrats. Many think this is one of the NCEC's most important functions. And many think this alone makes NCEC one of the best investments in progressive politics.

*continued on page 4*

## 2005 ELECTIONS LIFT DEMOCRATS' HOPES FOR NOVEMBER TAKEOVER

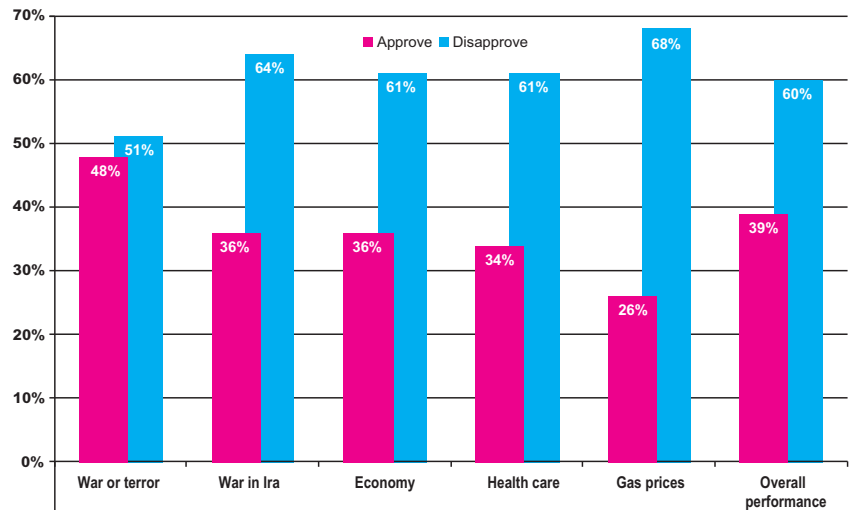
### AMERICANS SAY: TIME FOR A CHANGE

Democratic victories in both off-year gubernatorial contests provide further evidence that a national political climate is developing that should strongly favor Democrats in 2006, particularly in their bid to retake control of the House. Lieutenant Governor Tim Kaine's 52-46% victory in Virginia and Senator Jon Corzine's 53-43% win in New Jersey provide fresh evidence of voter dissatisfaction with the GOP.

President Bush's overall job approval rating has fallen to 39% and the number of people who view him as "honest and trustworthy" has dropped from a high of 70% in 2002 to 40%. (see graphs). Many political analysts believe his election eve campaign stop in Richmond, Virginia may have backfired by motivating more base Democratic supporters than Republicans. This rebuke of the President is a dramatic indication of just how far President Bush's stock has fallen over the past year, even in what is a Republican stronghold (Bush carried Virginia 54-45% in 2004).

Looking ahead to 2006, the President's tribulations, some of which may prove to be inextricable, include an unpopular war in Iraq, a failed attempt to reform Social Security, an inept response to the Hurricane Katrina tragedy, and a questionable Supreme Court nominee. All these will affect the course of the 2006 elections.

### Bush Job Performance Rated Dismal



*continued on page 2*

“Cover Story” continued from page 1

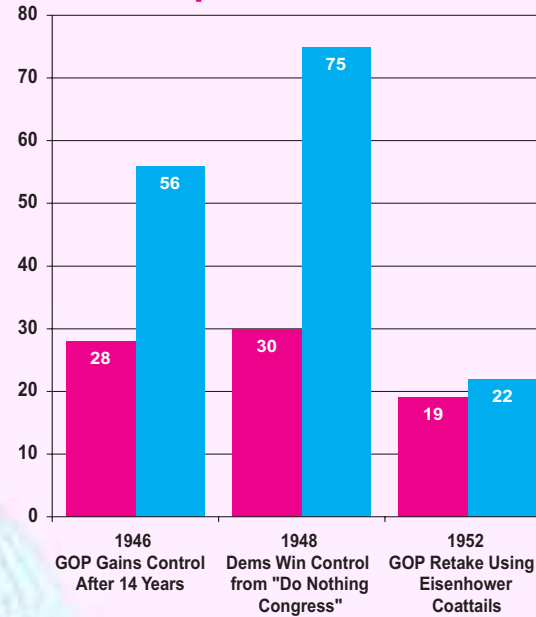
These factors are only the tip of the iceberg for Republicans. A series of scandals engulfing the House and Senate majority leaders, combined with the indictments of high-ranking aides to President Bush and Vice President Cheney, evoke memories of the 1994 midterm elections, when Republicans won a total of 56 formerly Democratic seats for a net gain of 52 seats. Democratic losses that year came in the aftermath of the 1992 House Bank scandal, an unpopular tax increase passed in 1993, failed attempts by the Democratic majority to reform health care, and a controversial crime bill. It is also interesting to note that Republicans may have helped set the stage for their 1994 performance by winning the 1993 gubernatorial elections in both New Jersey and Virginia. While it is true that the number of marginal districts has diminished over the past 12 years, Democrats need to net gain of only 15 seats in order to take over the House of Representatives in 2006. To put this in perspective, the President’s party lost 15 or more seats in eight of the 15 midterm election cycles for the period

dating from 2002 back to the Truman administration in 1946 (see graph).

Some political analysts and Republican operatives have dismissed Democratic prospects, noting that John Kerry won only 18 districts held by Republican incumbents. However, a careful review of the 1994 election casts doubt on the correlation of that statistic with the minority party’s ability to gain seats. Republicans defeated 34 Democratic incumbents in 1994, also winning 22 Democratic open seats. In 1992, President Clinton won a majority in 19 of the 34 districts lost by Democratic incumbents in 1994. Additionally, in 1992 Clinton won a plurality in 10 of the 22 open seats that had previously been held by Democrats but gained by Republicans in the next election. The 10 districts were Illinois 11, Maine 1, Michigan 8, Minnesota 1, New Jersey 2, Ohio 18, Oklahoma 2, Oregon 5, Tennessee 3, and Tennessee 4.

Clearly, when the prevailing political environment changes, especially for an incumbent president, the dynamics of congressional elections can also change, sometimes dramatically. What was even more

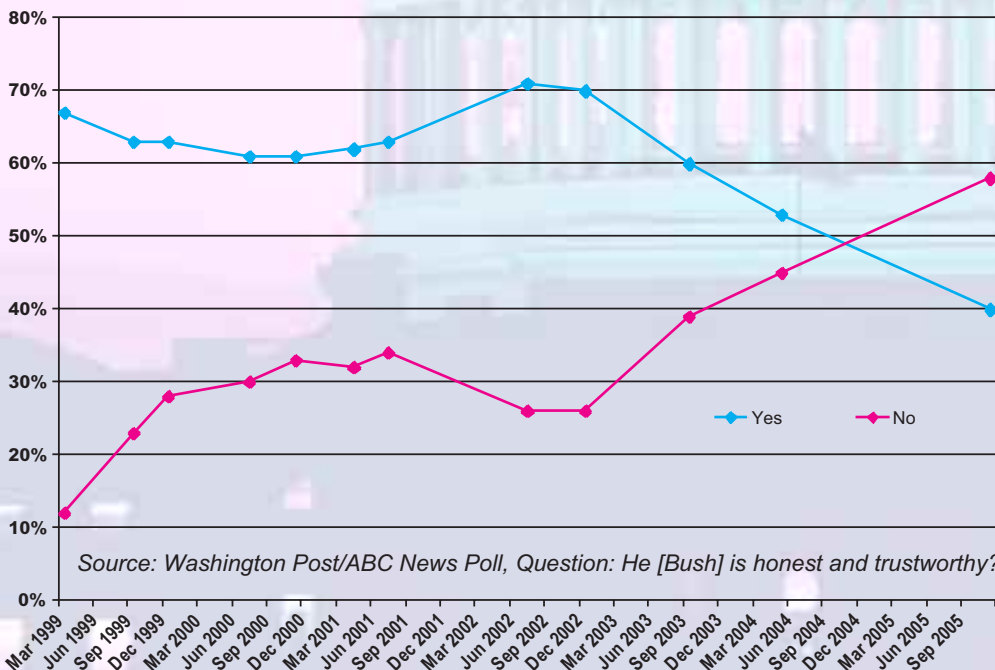
### Seats Required and Won When



striking and determinative about the 1992 and 1994 elections was Clinton’s 1992 margin in districts won by Republicans in 1994. In 10 of the 19 districts carried by Clinton in 1992, but where Democratic incumbents lost their seats in 1994, Clinton won the district by eight points or more. Moreover, of the 10 Democratic open seats listed above that were carried by Clinton in 1992 but gained by Republicans in 1994, Clinton’s margin was eight points or greater in three of the 10 seats, while another Republican open-seat gain supported Clinton by seven points in 1992. Clinton carried four others by at least four points.

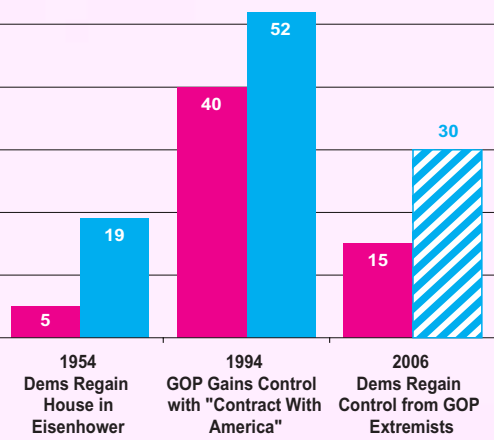
Returning to the relationship between 1994 and 2006, as we noted above, Republican incumbents currently occupy 18 seats in districts that Kerry carried in 2004. In addition, Republicans must also defend 29 seats that Bush won by eight points or less in 2004. Another 13 seats accorded Bush a margin of 8 to 10 points in 2004. In a majority of these 60 districts, Democrats have recruited respectable, sometimes outstanding, candidates. Assuming Democratic losses are fewer than five in 2006, they would have to win only about a third of the Republican-

### Bush Honesty Questioned - Public Opinion Sinks Dramatically



# 2006 US Senate Update

■ Seats Required for Minority Party to Gain Control  
■ Net Seats Won When Gaining Control



controlled seats where either Bush's margin was 10 points or less or that were carried by Kerry in order to take back control of the House. Considering the overall electoral environment and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's recruiting successes, this should be a manageable task. Conclusion: Put into historical context, gaining 15 or more seats in a midterm election cycle is not that unusual. This chart shows the number of seats needed by the minority party in order to take back control of the House and the actual number of seats gained by that party for every election cycle in which control of the House has switched dating back to the end of World War II. Assuming Democrats defeat half of the Republican incumbents running for reelection in seats carried by Kerry in 2004 and win the competitive open seats (Colorado 7, Minnesota 6, Iowa 1, and others), a national trend could easily spawn enough momentum in the other 30 seats carried by Bush with a margin under eight points for a Democratic House victory. In fact, if the political climate strongly favors Democrats in November 2006, it is possible that Democrats could win

If the national political environment continues to favor Democrats next November, Democratic gains in the Senate appear likely. At the same time, it appears Democrats may have a better chance of winning back control of the House than of gaining the six seats needed to take back the Senate. Since the July-August *Election Update*, significant developments have occurred in the following races:

## Florida

Republican leaders remain concerned that Representative and former Secretary of State Katharine Harris is too polarizing a figure to perform well enough to win a statewide race, but Harris remains extremely popular among the state's Republican activists. Thus far, her fund-raising and overall campaign efforts have been lackluster at best. A poll conducted in September by the Republican polling firm Strategic Vision shows Democratic incumbent Senator Bill Nelson with a 48% to 36% lead over Harris, while a poll conducted by Quinnipiac University in August has Nelson with a 57% to 33% lead. Republican Representative Mark Foley continues to consider getting into the race but has yet to do so.

## Minnesota

As was the case with the 2004 election, the 2006 election is expected to be close. The retirement of Senator Mark Dayton has left a wide field of

more than half of the races against Republican incumbents in districts won by Kerry and some of the Republican districts carried by Bush by a margin of 8 to 10 points in 2004. Clearly, a careful analysis shows that the mathematics is comparable to, if not more favorable than, that for Democrats in 2006 than it was for Republicans in 1994.

Democrats vying for the nomination. Patty Wetterling is leading a significant field of Democrats for the nomination thus far. According to a poll conducted by the Mellman Group, Patty Wetterling holds the highest favorability rating of any of the possible Democratic nominees. She scored a 51% favorability rating in comparison to her closest challenger Amy Klobuchar, who posted a 37% mark. Republican Congressman Mark Kennedy seems to be the likely candidate for the Republican Party; he has already raised more than a million dollars. When placed in a general election matchup, both Wetterling and Klobuchar hold advantages over Kennedy. Wetterling has a nine-point advantage while Klobuchar's lead is only two points.

## Montana

With the recent charges of corruption swirling around Congress and the suggested involvement of Senator Conrad Burns, Democrats may add a new target in their "Culture of Corruption" campaign against the Republicans. Senator Burns has been mentioned in the ongoing investigation into former lobbyist Jack Abramoff's activities regarding Tribal Affairs. Burns seat is definitely vulnerable in the upcoming election; he narrowly won reelection in '00, garnishing only 50.6% of the vote. He is likely to face a tough challenge in '06 from Democratic candidate John Morrison the current Montana State Auditor.

## New Jersey

Now that Senator Jon Corzine has been elected governor, he has selected as his successor U.S. House Democratic Caucus Chair, Bob Menendez. The son of Cuban immigrants, Menendez will be the second Cuban-American in the Senate. In November he will likely be challenged by Republican state

“Senate Update” continued from page 3

Senator Tom Kean Jr., son of the still-popular former governor and 9-11 Commission chairman, Thomas Kean.

## Ohio

Democratic Representative Sherrod Brown recently entered this race against incumbent Republican Mike DeWine. DeWine faces potential fallout not only from the scandals and problems swirling around at the national level, but also from ethics problems in the administration of outgoing Republican Governor Bob Taft. A poll conducted in June, before Brown had entered the race, by the Feldman Group for the DSCC showed DeWine with a lead of 42% to 36% over Brown. Perhaps more important, only 31% said DeWine deserves reelection, while 42% said they would favor someone else. In addition, DeWine had a negative favorable/unfavorable rating of 37/47. DeWine may be the most vulnerable Republican incumbent running for reelection to the Senate.

## Pennsylvania

Republican incumbent Rick Santorum also ranks among the most vulnerable Republican incumbents up for reelection next fall. State Treasurer Robert Casey Jr., will face only token opposition in the Democratic primary and should be a good fit with this state’s culturally conservative voters.

“Director” continued from page 1

With this ability to make informed political judgments comes a great responsibility. Every candidate for public office, from the top to the bottom of the ticket, thinks he has a good chance to win. It is this optimism that produces good candidates. If they thought they were sure losers, they wouldn’t run. NCEC, based on a broad range of information for which we spend time and resources, may be less

## SENATE DEMOCRATS LIKELY TO ADD SEATS IN 2006 ELECTIONS

	Likely Democratic (12)	Leans Democratic (6)	Toss-up (4)	Leans Republican (3)	Likely Republican (8)	
17 Democrats and 1 Independent	California (Feinstein)	Florida (Nelson)	Minnesota (Open)			
	Connecticut (Lieberman)	Maryland (open)				
	Delaware (Carper)	New Jersey (Menendez)				
	Hawaii (Akaka)	Washington (Cantwell)				
	Massachusetts (Kennedy)	West Virginia (Byrd)				
	Michigan (Stabenow)					
	Nebraska (Nelson)					
	New Mexico (Bingaman)					
	New York (Clinton)					
	North Dakota (Conrad)					
	Vermont (open/Ind)					
	Wisconsin (Kohl)					
	15 Republicans		Pennsylvania (Santorum)	Montana (Burns)	Arizona (Kyl)	Indiana (Lugar)
				Ohio (DeWine)	Missouri (Talent)	Maine (Snowe)
				Rhode Island (Chafee)	Tennessee (open)	Mississippi (Lott)
						Nevada (Ensign)
						Texas (Hutchison)
				Utah (Hatch)		
				Virginia (Allen)		
				Wyoming (Thomas)		

Even early polling from October by the Republican polling firm Strategic Vision demonstrates Santorum’s potential vulnerability, with a negative job rating (40/47; approve/disapprove).

## Rhode Island

Senator Lincoln Chafee is facing a tough battle for reelection to a third term. Former state Attorney General Sheldon Whitehouse and Secretary of State Matt Brown have announced their candidacies for the Democrats. A recent poll conducted by Brown University indicates that Sheldon Whitehouse has opened up a 16 point lead on Matt Brown for the nomination. When placed in a general election matchup, Senator Chafee holds a lead over both

candidates; he holds a 13 point advantage over Whitehouse and a 23 point advantage over Brown.

## Vermont

Representative Bernie Sanders is running for the seat being vacated by Independent Senator James Jeffords. Like Jeffords, Sanders is an Independent and will caucus with Democrats if elected to the Senate. Sanders is unlikely to face a serious Democratic challenger. Republicans failed to get Governor Jim Douglas to run. Lieutenant Governor Brian Dubie, software company executive Richard Tarrant, and former congressional candidate Greg Parke are running for the Republican nomination.

optimistic. But it is not up to us to throw cold water on a candidate whom we want to encourage. Therefore NCEC is very careful about the publication of our marginal list and we try not to couch the language of our judgments in absolute terms.

In previous *Election Updates* we shared with you our early views about 2006 House races and our guarded optimism about electing the additional

15 Democratic seats necessary for majority control.

In the enclosed *Election Update* we look at some of the important 2006 Senate races. Though Democrats must defend 18 Senate seats and the Republicans only 13, we are optimistic about making important gains which would help block Bush and Cheney and their regressive agenda.